

## Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance

In line with the strategy developed within the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) for Turkey, expanding livelihood and job opportunities for Syrians and refugees of other nationalities in Turkey is a strategic objective of UNHCR in an effort to support self-reliance as a prerequisite to any durable solution.

Turkey's national asylum framework, as set out in the Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection in January 2016 and the Regulation on Work Permit of International Protection Applicants and International Protection Status Holders in April 2016, grants access to formal employment, thus providing an enabling environment to achieve self-reliance.

Government statistics indicate that nearly 22,000 Syrian refugees have been issued work permits since the adoption of the Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection in January 2016 and the Regulation on Work Permit of International Protection Applicants and International Protection Status Holders in April 2016. These figures give an indication of the challenge ahead and the need to maintain and strengthen the efforts to facilitate formal economic participation of refugees.

Even though there are various challenges that remain, it is also important to state that Turkey has a dynamic economy with labour gaps in various sectors such as manufacturing. In January 2018, the fees relating to issuance of work permits have been halved in an attempt to encourage employers to engage refugees.

## 2018 Strategy and Priorities

UNHCR's strategy for livelihood and self-reliance is of a catalytic nature and focuses on several aspects: the institutional, legal and administrative environment, the capacity and skills of refugees and the economic absorptive capacity and potential of local labour markets.

### Support the implementation of the legal framework on access to employment:

- Despite a favourable legal environment in Turkey, several challenges exist for refugees to access formal employment, not least the substantial number of refugees of working age. Within the existing legal framework, barriers such as the formal quota for refugees which must not exceed 10 per cent of the total workforce per enterprise, and the requirement that refugees be employed in their province of registration, hinder broader access. Support to the authorities in the implementation of the legal framework is essential to advocate a more flexible and inclusive approach in order to maximize access by refugees of all nationalities.

Over **300**



ISKUR staff members and counsellors have been supported to strengthen their capacity\*

Over **3,000**



Refugees participated in entrepreneurship trainings\*

Over **100**



Syrian-owned business were supported through the licensing process\*

Over **360**



Refugees received entrepreneurship grant\*\*

data as of end of July 2018

\* since 2016

\*\* since 2017

- This element of strong advocacy requires coordination with other actors in the sector, in particular FAO, ILO and UNDP with whom UNHCR is aiming to continue building upon its strong linkages.

#### **Increase the capacity and skills of refugees:**

- UNHCR aims to support and foster linkages between refugees and state livelihoods and employment services. In this regard, the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) with the support of UNHCR engages in joint information dissemination to refugees and in supporting refugee access to services provided in ISKUR service centres.
- Support to the Vocational Qualification Authorities to facilitate the certification of skills.
- Joint programming with FAO on the first largescale project aiming to expand livelihoods opportunities for Syrian refugees and host communities in the agricultural sector by enhancing their agricultural skills. In 2017 and 2018, the project aims to reach some 1,400 people. The project reached 900 beneficiaries throughout 2017 and is currently ongoing with 500 beneficiaries.



- Refugee entrepreneurship is one of the areas where refugees create added value for the host economies. Indeed, Turkey currently has nearly 8,000 refugee-owned businesses operating as formally registered companies. Entrepreneurs from the refugee community may participate in UNHCR-implemented entrepreneurship activities, including training, mentorship and financial support, which aim to foster and stimulate refugee entrepreneurship in two ways, namely through start-up support provided to refugees who wish to establish their own business, as well as through business development support targeting existing refugee businesses to develop further. Participants are supported with small grants, productive asset support and incentives for various types of trainings provided by UNHCR.

#### **Contribute to strengthening the economic absorption and demand aspects:**

- Advancement of partnerships with development partners, including the International Financial Institutions, and the World Bank in particular, to find synergies with national development programmes for longer term solutions, such as through national systems and programmes that aim to provide opportunities for livelihoods and self-reliance. Joint analytical work to better understand the economic and absorption capacity in various labour market areas, taking into account social cohesion considerations, will be undertaken with a view to developing business models which would accelerate the number of refugees legally employed.
- Continuation of collaboration with the private sector, including international brands with supply chain in Turkey, with the objective of information sharing and awareness raising; support in work permit application procedures; expanded partnership for job training opportunities and job matching.

## Activities and Progress

- UNHCR works closely with ISKUR to ensure uniform service delivery and support the provision to refugees of quality counselling on services related to job opportunities and issues surrounding legal challenges. Project staff are provided to ISKUR for the implementation of joint programmes. Jointly-established kiosks in ISKUR service centres remain essential contact points for refugees to receive employment counselling and job-matching support.
- **A Guide to Employment** brochure, published in partnership with ISKUR, responds to the demand from refugees and other stakeholders on how to join the active labour force in Turkey. Refugees currently face difficulties to have their qualifications recognised in Turkey. Turkish national qualifications and standards are being translated into Arabic to enhance refugee knowledge of the national standards. In coming months, UNHCR will start a pilot project in support of the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) to facilitate the **accreditation process for refugees**.
- On 11 May 2018 in Istanbul, UNHCR co-hosted a **conference on “Labour Market Adaptation of Syrians under Temporary Protection in Turkey: Challenges and Opportunities”**, with the former Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Turkey and the Fair Labour Association (FLA). The conference aimed to bring together public and private sector stakeholders to create a platform for exchanging knowledge and experience on refugee self-reliance, with a focus on labour market dynamics. Panel participants represented both public and private sector perspectives with active contribution from trade unions, associations, chambers, international brands, Turkish SMEs and refugee-owned enterprises. UNHCR Turkey is currently working closely with the relevant Ministry counterparts to follow up on action points arising from this meeting.
- In 2017, the UNHCR-FAO joint agriculture sector project trained 900 refugees, in five cities in Turkey. This year, the project continues its second phase and will reach 500 beneficiaries in Adana, Gaziantep, Izmir, Mardin, Mersin, and Sanliurfa. Training topics include vegetable and fruit production, poultry, food processing, livestock and greenhouse management.
- Currently UNHCR is implementing vocational and language training programmes in 9 provinces of Turkey in collaboration with municipalities, governorates, sub-governorates and other partners. As of July 2018, over 1500 beneficiaries were reached through ongoing and completed trainings provided by UNHCR and its partners.



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## External and Donor Relations

**Thanks to UNHCR's donors for supporting our livelihoods and self-reliance activities in Turkey and for their unrestricted and regional funds in 2018:**

European Union | Japan | United States | Canada | Norway | France | Germany | Private donors Australia | Finland | Sweden | Netherlands | United Kingdom | Private donors Spain | Denmark | Australia | Switzerland | Private donors Republic of Korea | Italy | Belgium

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### **LINKS**

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